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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

August 11, 2015

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
William Jefferson Clinton Federal Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

Thank you for providing your senior staff for a briefing today on the wastewater spill from the Gold King Mine in Colorado into the Animas River. I am writing to follow up on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) efforts to address this serious spill, which released an estimated 3 million gallons of contaminated water containing high levels of dangerous toxins, including arsenic, lead and other heavy metals. This spill is already impacting several states as well as Indian Tribes.

I know you agree that protecting the health of the families and children that are affected by this large release of contaminated wastewater must be the EPA's top priority. EPA must commit to do whatever is necessary to mitigate the spill and its impacts.

I ask that you keep me regularly informed of the Agency's actions, as well as of the results of the ongoing investigation of this incident. In addition, I request that you commit to taking immediate action to ensure that EPA provides timely information to the affected communities and coordinates efforts with federal, state and local officials as the cleanup and investigation continue. I also urge EPA to take steps to ensure that a similar incident does not happen in the future.

Thank you for your cooperation with this request.

Sincerely,

Barbara Boxer
Ranking Member

